



## Buying a puppy? 5 things you should know before buying your next best friend

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MADISON – Buying a new puppy can be an exciting and happy experience. But too often, though, it turns into an unpleasant and expensive experience when the puppy quickly becomes ill or dies, according to Dr. Yvonne Bellay, the humane programs veterinarian at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

“We hear these stories all the time along with those that find out their new pet’s breed or pedigree isn’t what the seller promised. Worse yet, people see dogs being raised in unhealthy conditions and make the purchase ‘to save the dog’, but they don’t realize that their purchase just kept that breeder in business for another day—allowing them to do the same to more dogs,” Bellay says.

There are some things you can do to protect yourself from these unhappy situations, Bellay says. You should be wary if the breeder from whom you are considering purchasing a puppy does any of the following:

**Won’t let you see where the puppies or dogs are kept.** If the breeder refuses to let you see where the puppies are kept or offers to meet you in a parking lot instead, be suspicious. They may not want you to see the conditions of the facility where the dogs are kept.

**Unable or unwilling to provide information about veterinary care.** Breeders and shelters are required to provide a certain level of veterinary care to animals in their possession. If they are either unable to provide documentation of such care or are unwilling to provide the information to you, be suspicious. A dog seller should be able to provide you with detailed documentation of the dates of care and the care given. Also make sure to ask about a health guarantee. What will the breeder do for you if the puppy gets sick or, worse, dies?

**Advertisements do not list a license number.** A licensed breeder will have a valid license number and it will be listed in any advertisements or on their website. Not all breeders are required to be licensed if they sell fewer than 25 dogs per year, but it is prudent to look for a license number which will look like this: 123456-DS.

**Parent not on site.** If you can’t see at least the dam of the litter, forget it. Breeders will often seek a stud that will best match their dam, so they may not have both parents, but they should at least have one.

**Found on the internet.** A listing of reputable breeders is available from most regional and local kennel clubs. If you seek a particular breed, check out the breeders closest to you first before buying off the internet.

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“And remember that anyone trying to sell a product on the internet will make it look as good as possible, so keep in mind that you may not get the same dog from the adorable picture you just saw,” Bellay says.

For your own protection and for that of your new puppy, do your research and know what to look for when shopping for a puppy or dog.

“We have many resources available on our website to help with the responsible purchase of a new puppy including questions you should ask and tips for internet shopping,” Bellay says.

In 2011, DATCP implemented a law that requires some dog breeders and others involved in dog sales, adoptions and sheltering to be inspected and licensed to ensure the safety and well-being of the dogs and ensure that purchasers are protected as well. The law requires the department to inspect and license every dog seller and dog facility in the State of Wisconsin that sells more than 25 dogs a year from more than 3 litters. It also requires that the dogs be examined by a veterinarian before they are sold or adopted and prohibits the sale of puppies until they are at least 7 weeks old.

Visit [http://datcp.wi.gov/Animals/Dog\\_Seller\\_and\\_Shelters/Information\\_for\\_Consumers/index.asp](http://datcp.wi.gov/Animals/Dog_Seller_and_Shelters/Information_for_Consumers/index.asp) for questions to ask before you buy a puppy, a list of licensed dog sellers in Wisconsin, and background information on the Wisconsin law. If you’ve run across a breeder that has caused you concern, you are urged to report them to DATCP at 608.224.4872.

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